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### **SOCIO-PHILOSOPHICAL MECHANISMS FOR ENHANCING INDIVIDUAL ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY IN CIVIL SOCIETY**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

This article examines the socio-philosophical mechanisms for the formation and enhancement of individual environmental responsibility in the context of the development of civil society institutions. It explores the essence of the concepts of “environmental duty” and “environmental responsibility,” as well as their interrelationship and distinctive features. The article also investigates the role of civil society institutions in strengthening individuals’ environmental responsibility. Keywords: civil society, environmental responsibility, environmental duty, axiology, post-non-classical determinism, social transformation, mahalla, NGOs. From the emergence of humanity to the present day, human beings have continuously sought to master nature and utilize its resources to satisfy their needs. The development of human intelligence has led to unprecedented achievements and discoveries in science and technology. By the twenty-first century, however, humanity’s efforts to achieve a prosperous life, alongside their positive outcomes, have also contributed to ecological tension and environmental crises. The anthropocentric approach to nature has begun to produce adverse consequences. Relations between humans and nature have reached such a critical stage that even modern technologies created by humans are no longer sufficient to resolve the problems that have emerged. Laws and penalties alone have proved incapable of ensuring the preservation of nature. This situation demonstrates that environmental security and a sustainable balance in human–nature relations can be achieved



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primarily through a transformation of human consciousness. Any positive change in the relationship between humans and nature must begin with changes in human consciousness and worldview. Therefore, a fundamental reconsideration of the ecological worldview of members of society has become an urgent requirement of the present era.

In the context of building a New Uzbekistan and establishing the principles of a social state, strengthening the role of civil society institutions is of particular importance. Accordingly, this issue has been identified as one of the priorities of the country's domestic and foreign policy. However, despite the laws adopted and opportunities created by the state, the insufficient manifestation of genuine environmental responsibility in the behavior of members of society and the failure to apply environmental knowledge in everyday practice remain serious socio-philosophical problems.

In civil society, environmental responsibility does not merely mean compliance with state laws. Rather, it represents a form of activity that has become an integral part of an individual's internal moral and ethical convictions and everyday needs. Therefore, a socio-philosophical investigation of the social factors involved in the formation and enhancement of individual environmental responsibility is highly relevant.

The term “environmental duty” is formed through the combination of two concepts—*environmental* and *duty*. “Ecology is the science concerned with the relationships between living organisms and the environment in which they live” [1], while “duty is a moral concept denoting an individual's obligation toward another person, family, community, people, or homeland” [2].

Thus, environmental duty refers to an obligation imposed upon an individual by society, the state, or the law to protect nature and refrain from causing harm to the environment.



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Environmental responsibility, in turn, refers to the transformation of environmental duty into an individual's personal moral and ethical need and the transition toward voluntary and active environmental practice based on an awareness of the environmental consequences of one's actions. It is characterized by a high degree of personalization.

Although these two concepts are closely related, there are significant distinctions between them.

| Environmental Duty                 | Environmental Responsibility      |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Objective social norm              | Subjective moral and ethical need |
| Externally imposed requirement     | Internal moral imperative         |
| Theoretically understood knowledge | Personalized practice             |
| Passive adaptation                 | Active civic engagement           |

The development of civil society is a leading social force in transforming environmental duty into active and personalized environmental responsibility. The more developed society becomes and the more actively its members participate in social life, the stronger their awareness of the need to protect nature becomes. As a result, people move from verbal recognition to practical action. In other words, caring for nature becomes a personal concern and responsibility of every individual. This represents one of the most significant benefits of active civic participation.

### Model for Enhancing Environmental Responsibility

Stage 1 — Acquiring and understanding basic information. At this stage, individuals develop environmental awareness, receive environmental education, and acquire theoretical knowledge. Environmental duty is understood as an objective social norm.



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Stage 2 — Developing a sense of personal involvement. At this stage, a transformation in worldview begins, involving a transition from anthropocentrism to ecocentrism. A sense of personal involvement and environmental values are formed. The individual begins to perceive the destruction of nature as a personal loss.

Stage 3 — Assuming responsibility and taking practical action. At this stage, environmental values are transformed into actual social behavior, civic engagement, and voluntary environmental practices. Responsibility becomes fully personalized and develops into a moral imperative that guides behavior even in the absence of external supervision.

The functions of civil society institutions in enhancing environmental responsibility are of considerable importance.

The mahalla “(Arabic: place, location, space) is a socio-territorial unit covering a particular area of a city, whose residents are united into a community and which is based on the principle of self-government” [3]. The mahalla is a key social institution that integrates national and moral values with contemporary environmental requirements. It contributes to preserving traditional Uzbek values and practices through the organization of *hashar* (voluntary community work), neighborhood improvement and beautification activities, the prevention of wastefulness, and similar collective initiatives. Through mechanisms of social control and positive social example, the mahalla transforms a general sense of environmental duty into personal responsibility.

Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations (NGOs)

“A non-governmental non-profit organization is a self-governing organization voluntarily established by individuals and/or legal entities, which does not consider the generation of income (profit) as the primary purpose of its activities and does not distribute the income (profit) received among its participants (members)” [4].



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NGOs are institutions that unite members of society around common environmental goals, provide platforms for civic engagement, and facilitate the practical implementation of environmental initiatives. Through these activities, NGOs contribute to the development of a sense of social involvement and personal responsibility for environmental issues.

There are three major socio-philosophical barriers that may disrupt the intrinsic relationship between environmental duty and environmental responsibility, and these factors should not be overlooked:

1. The persistence of an anthropocentric and utilitarian perception of nature. For centuries, nature has been viewed primarily as an economic resource and a means of sustaining human life, and elements of this perception continue to persist in social consciousness.
2. The emergence of environmental alienation. As a result of urbanization and the increasing pressure of the technosphere, individuals may become physically and psychologically disconnected from natural ecosystems and begin to perceive environmental crises as external problems that do not directly concern them.
3. The gap between environmental awareness and practical opportunities. An individual may possess a sense of environmental duty and moral readiness to act; however, society may lack the necessary green infrastructure and socio-economic incentive mechanisms required to transform this readiness into actual environmental practice.

In conclusion, environmental duty and environmental responsibility differ fundamentally in terms of their degree of personalization. Environmental duty represents an objective social and legal norm, whereas environmental responsibility is its active, voluntary, and practical manifestation after it has been internalized as an individual moral and ethical need.

The transformation of environmental knowledge into practical responsibility



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cannot be achieved through moral and educational awareness-raising activities alone. Green infrastructure, economic incentives, and mechanisms of social oversight exercised by civil society institutions must function in an integrated manner. Only through the interaction of these mechanisms can environmental knowledge and duty be consistently transformed into conscious, personalized, and sustainable environmental responsibility.

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